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# The Machinery of Government



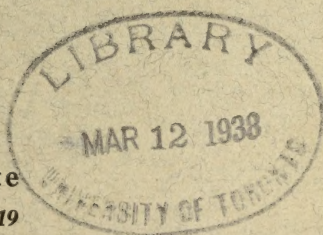
*By*

The Hon. J. S. McLennan

**The Senate**

*March 20th, 1919*

Ottawa, Canada







## THE HONOURABLE J. S. McLENNAN ON THE DESIRABILITY OF BETTERMENT IN THE MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT

It is not necessary to take up the time of this Honourable House by any exposition of the gravity of the circumstances in which we are placed. The burdens of taxation which must fall on the present and coming generations, the depletion of the intellectual and the productive power of those generations, the inevitable results of the strain placed on Canada, as well as other nations of the world during the four years which have just passed, the problems to which these conditions give rise, are not only more important, but more complex, than those which have had to be solved by any previous generation. Their difficulties are recognized almost universally; but there is one difficulty which faces the present government and will face any government which succeeds it, which is less often recognized, viz.: That more people are thinking about the great matters of life in every department than ever before. If it were only the student, this would be important, for what the student thinks to-day, the man in the street will think to-morrow. There are others, many of whom have been untrained to think; all of them are people who have been under great strain, and this strain shows in impatience, in hasty judgments, in magnifying the importance of the particular problem which concerns the individual.

Thousands of men every month are coming back to Canada, who have been face to face with grim realities, and it is more than probable that they will come back to Canada looking to see realities in every phase of our life, as they have seen them in France and Flanders. They have there seen how grievous consequences followed mistaking painted canvas for real trees, and they will, as I have said, carry this tendency to distinguish between realities and shams when they return to civil life.

This makes a new factor in the situation which concerns a government, for if history tells us anything with certainty, it is, that what a free people wants, that people will get.

The government of the day, therefore, has to face, not only difficulties of the utmost gravity in the problems with which they have to deal, but this additional difficulty—the temper of the people for whom they are carrying on the government of the country.



The object of my addressing the House to-day is that I have formed the opinion that, however sound may be the aims, however high the ideals of the Ministry in power, that at a time when more is demanded of them than of any of their predecessors, the Ministry is forced to produce its results by a political system which had shown signs of weakness before the war, but which also is as inadequate to carry on the government in a time of reconstruction, as it was to carry on the government without patching up and supplementing during these recent years of war.

No one can fairly look at what has been accomplished during the war without recognising that what has been accomplished is magnificent, and far beyond what the most optimistic before the war would have considered as possible to the people of Canada and to their government; but the point I make is that the highest degree of success is important in the times that await us. **Conditions demand the most effective dealing with every problem of policy or of administration, the raising of every dollar of revenue, which can be done with equity and without checking production, the spending of every one of those dollars so that for each one of them the government of the country will get a hundred cents worth of labour or of material by the same standard as is applied by the most successful of our private corporations—and the settling of problems which now seem ominous, so that the country can devote itself as soon as possible with confidence and security to production.**

It is usual in dealing with the defects of any political system, to dip one's brush in lurid colors, but for the sake of brevity, I forego the picturesqueness which this method makes possible. If anyone likes it, I would refer them to the political novels of Mr. H. G. Wells, or to something nearer, various speeches which are quite as much works of fiction as the novels of that brilliant author.

The improvements that I would suggest for consideration fall into two classes with the two phases of the functions of a Ministry. One of them is Deliberative, the shaping of policy; the other—the Executive—the carrying out of that policy if it receives the sanction of Parliament.

Let us take the first—DELIBERATION. We have a cabinet of twenty-one. It has been known ever since men took counsel together that this was too large a body for sound deliberation. A score of men, under any circumstances, waste their time or reach unsound conclusions if they attempt to take

up matters which require full information and deliberation. This evil has been recognized for a long time. Even in commercial affairs, companies which find it necessary to have directorates numbering ten or twelve invariably have executive committees of three or five, which in reality carry on the business of the company, and there is no business enterprise which deals with so widespread, so intricate a number of administrative questions as does the Government of the Dominion.

Consider the work of a Minister holding an important portfolio. He attends Council daily probably over two hours or more on the average; he spends part of his time there in passing routine orders-in-council. He attends meetings of committees; he carries on the work of his Department—there is scarcely any caller to whom he can deny himself. He has to look after the interests of his district and his constituency and the applications of everyone therein who wants anything from the government. He has his Parliamentary duties. The day for the Minister, as for ordinary people, is only twenty-four hours. Where in it then is time for deliberation?

Sir John A. Macdonald on the 10th of June, 1887, in dealing with the reconstruction of his government, spoke as follows:—

“This will add a Minister to the present list. On the other hand, we consider that the two Departments of Customs and Inland Revenue are administrative only. They are not **suggestive** but **administrative**, and after the policy of the Government, with respect either to Internal Revenue or Customs, is settled, the Ministers at the head of these Departments will see that the law is carried out. It is proposed, therefore, that when the re-organization has commenced, the Minister at the head of Customs and the Minister at the head of Inland Revenue will not be necessarily Cabinet Ministers. They will be political heads, but they need not actually, as a matter of practice, be members of the Cabinet. The intention of the Government in making this alteration, among other things, is to introduce the system which operates well in England, of having certain Departments presided over by political heads, who will thus commence their official career by holding these offices without being of necessity, members of the Cabinet. This is a proposition, made many years ago, by the honourable member for South Oxford (Sir Richard Cartwright), who suggested that it would be well to introduce this system as soon as might be, and the system of having political secretaries and important officers of the various Departments who would be Ministers, and yet not be, of necessity, members of the Cabinet. **It is of considerable importance that the number of Cabinet Ministers should not be increased, that is to say, that every member holding a political office in Parliament should not ex necessitate, be a member of the Cabinet. That would overload a Cabinet, and in that regard would not promote promptness of action . . . .** A similar proposition was, I think, made quo ad the Department of Justice years ago, when my honourable friend from East York was at the head of



the Government, and it was proposed the Department of Justice would be divided. These propositions, in a modified form, are now before Parliament, under the auspices of my honorable friend, the Minister of Justice . . . . They will go out with the Government, and they will be political personages as much as if they were members of the Cabinet."

SIR RICHARD CARTWRIGHT.—The honourable gentleman particularly intimated that it was his wish to promote rising talent and give the young men a chance. In that I entirely concur, for my part. I have always believed that it was a defect in our system, seeing that younger members of either political party could hardly expect to reach on one bound, the position of Cabinet Ministers, that they had practically no opportunity to serve an apprenticeship which would have been of great value to them, and also give the Prime Minister an opportunity of ascertaining how far they were fitted to fill the more important offices . . . . I may remind the House that what I proposed at the time the First Minister alluded to, was a reduction of the number of Cabinet Ministers, from thirteen or fourteen, as they are now, to a very much smaller number, and giving them permanent under secretaries. That was my proposition. **I think that thirteen or fourteen Ministers are too great a number for this country.** . . . .

Sir John A. Macdonald, later in the debate said:—

"We desire to have a Minister of Trade and Commerce whose attention will not be given to mere pound-shillings-and-pence matters, which belong to the duties of the Minister of Finance, **but whose mind will be devoted to considering the various means of developing and extending, and protecting our commerce.**"

As I read the debates, his idea was concurred in by Sir Richard Cartwright. The latter certainly was emphatic on the fact that large cabinets were a mistake.

Honourable Members will see that it was the opinion of the Leader of the government and the Leader of the opposition of thirty years ago, that a small Cabinet was desirable. The tendency of events has been to have Cabinets constantly enlarge in numbers, and that tendency will increase as the duties of government become more multifarious. Nothing in the course of our constitutional development has secured the division of the work into its two phases, the shaping of policy, or, to use Sir John Macdonald's phrase, suggestive work and administrative duties, although not only in this country but in Great Britain, there has existed "the proved impracticability of devoting the necessary time to thinking out organization and preparation for action in the mere interstices of the time required for the transaction of business."

We can now pass to the administrative side of the functions of the government, viz.: the efficient carrying out of policy,

functions which are administrative and executive. It has long been recognized that there is room for improvement. There was a Civil Service Commission in 1892; there was another commission which presented its report in 1908; in 1913 there was again presented to parliament a report by a distinguished British Administrator on the Canadian system of carrying on government, which suggested vital and far-reaching changes. The Ministers of the Crown during this long period must have been familiar with the defects of the system. At all events, these reports brought to their attention conditions which needed alterations. I think I need not take up the time of the House by any proof that our executive system needs thorough, radical changes, **a reconstruction—not a patching up**, than to say that after all this independent testimony, that, after all this experience of successive Ministries, it is possible, at a time when everyone is being urged to buy war-savings stamps, to find on the table of Parliament such a report as that of three experts who recently examined the conditions in the Government Printing Bureau.

This report on the Printing Bureau would indicate that the conditions there are bad, but, the system on which our administration has been carried on, lends itself so easily to the conditions described in that report, that I would stake whatever reputation I may have for good sense, by saying that it is my belief that if the government would select one or two or three experts in administration and give them an opportunity to examine the Departments, the Post Offices, the Railway systems carried on by the government, this group of experts, whether one or more, would come before the Cabinet and report instance after instance where they found waste of time, of space and of material. I say this with a full knowledge, that while there are many earnest and competent men in the service of the government, the system on which we have been working is not one to give scope to their earnestness, to their ingenuity, to their desire to get good results which may be looked on with pride.

In dealing with such matters as these—in dealing with the system which has grown up through many years, the offshoot of a system which has produced the highest development of representative government the world has known, we must not lose our sense of proportion. Immeasurably greater and immeasurably more pressing things have been before the Ministry in recent times, but for the reasons which have been dwelt on, I feel this House will agree with me, it is now time to take up these questions, and find for them a satisfactory solution.



Canada is not alone in these conditions. In 1915 Mr. Asquith was carrying on the Imperial Government with a Cabinet of twenty-four, the largest that had been known, at all events in recent times. In 1917 there were some ninety Ministers inclusive of the war cabinet of four. It may be noted in passing that the British Ministry includes the Officers of the King's household.

The War Cabinet in its report for that year thus states the course of events:—

"It had become increasingly evident that the older system under which the supreme direction of the war rested with a Cabinet consisting of departmental chiefs under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister, was not sufficiently prompt and elastic." . . . . Even the formation of a smaller Cabinet Committee of the Departmental Ministers did not meet the needs of the case."

This was the stage of development with which we won through in Canada—but in England "the supreme direction of the war was entrusted to a small war cabinet freed from all administrative duties and yet in the closest touch with all departmental Ministers, while **administrative** responsibility was placed in the hands of Ministers who were left free to devote their whole time to this aspect of governmental work."

The report further states about the administrative work that the new system "has freed the various departmental Ministers from the constant necessity which rested on them under the old Cabinet system of considering those wider aspects of public policy which often had nothing to do with their departments, but for which they were collectively responsible." They are therefore able to devote a far larger part of their time to those administrative duties." . . . .

This is the report of the War Cabinet. If one wants to read a criticism of their method it can be seen in the Contemporary Review, vol. 112, page 620, in an article entitled "Dismantling the British Constitution," by Mr. Swift MacNeill.

The Imperial Government in 1917 appointed a Committee on the machinery of government with the following reference:—

"To enquire into the responsibilities of the various Departments of the central executive Government, and to advise in what manner the exercise and distribution by the Government of its functions should be improved."

Its personnel was remarkable for high qualifications. Its chairman was Lord Haldane, who as Secretary for War, inaugurated a military system in 1908, which only required expansion



to turn the small standing army of Britain into the millions of men who did their full share in the defeat of the Central Powers. Mr. Montagu had occupied most important positions in the Government. Mr. Thomas was a member of the government with the weight conferred on him by his chairmanship of the National Society of Railwaymen. There were two officials, men of great experience in departmental work—one of them, Sir George Murray, who made the report on Canadian Administration to which I have referred. Another member was Mrs. Sidney Webb, a lady whose attainments as an investigator have caused her to be on five or six of the most important Commissions established by the Imperial Government in the last ten years.

I shall not attempt to summarize the findings of this report. This would be a difficult task as it is written in a very concise form and great restraint of language, but I shall merely call the attention of the House to certain of their remarks which deal with the question in hand. The report says:—

“The main functions of the Cabinet may, we think, be described as:—

(a) The final determination of the policy to be submitted to Parliament.

(b) The supreme control of the national executive in accordance with the policy prescribed by Parliament, and

(c) The continuous co-ordination and delimitation of the activities of the several Departments of State. For the due performance of these functions the following conditions seem to be essential, or, at least, desirable:—

(i) The Cabinet should be **small in number**—preferably ten or, at most, twelve;

(ii) It should meet frequently;

(iii) It should be supplied in the most convenient form with all the information and material necessary to enable it to arrive at expeditious decisions;

(iv) It should make a point of consulting personally all the Ministers whose work is likely to be affected by its decisions and

(v) It should have a systematic method of securing that its decisions are effectually carried out by the several Departments concerned.”

It quotes the report of the 1917 War Cabinet which says:—

“The most important constitutional development in the United Kingdom during the last year has been the introduction of the War Cabinet system. This change was the direct outcome of the War itself. As the magnitude of the war increased, it became evident that the Cabinet system of peace days was inadequate to cope with the novel conditions.”

On which the Committee makes the following comment:—“But we think that a rearrangement of the supreme direction of the executive organization as it formerly existed has been rendered necessary, not merely by the war itself, but by the prospect after the war.”

And in answer to the question as to whether it is possible to return to the old order of things (which I take to mean those before the war) the Committee states **we feel confident that the latter question must be answered in the negative.**

"12. Turning next to the formulation of policy, we have come to the conclusion, after surveying what came before us, that in the sphere of civil government the duty of investigation and thought, as preliminary to action, might with great advantage be more definitely recognized. It appears to us that adequate provision has not been made in the past for the organized acquisition of facts and information, and for the systematic application of thought, as preliminary to the settlement of policy and its subsequent administration.

"13. This is no new notion . . . . The reason of the separation of work has been the proved impracticability of devoting the necessary time to thinking out organization and preparation for action in the mere interstices of the time required for the transaction of business.

"14. . . . "But we urge strongly (a) that in all Departments better provision should be made for **enquiry, research, and reflection** before policy is defined and put into operation; (b) that for some purposes the necessary research and enquiry should be carried out or supervised by a Department of Government specially charged with these duties, but working in the closest collaboration with the administrative Departments concerned with its activities; (c) that special attention should be paid to the methods of recruiting the personnel to be employed upon such work; and (d) that in all Departments the higher officials in charge of administration should have more time to devote to this portion of their duties."

The report states that the Commission did not feel called on to consider whether the new type of Cabinet should consist of Ministers in charge of the principal Departments, or of Ministers without portfolios able to concentrate their whole attention upon the problems submitted for their consideration.

This I regret, for it will be seen that I have not foregone entering on territory where these angels of the Imperial Parliament have feared to tread.

I hope, therefore, that the following suggestions I lay before the House as to the changes proposed in the form of government without any sacrifice of the essential principles of constitutional government, may be considered by the House, not as rashness, but as springing from a wish to give some constructive value to my remarks.

On the Deliberative side I propose (and it will be noted that I propose it in harmony with the earlier quoted statement of the British Committee) that we should have a small Cabinet, say six, charged with the duties indicated in the British report, viz.: **Policy, Control of Executive, and Co-ordination**



**and Delimitation** between the different departments of State. Preferably, the members of the Cabinet should not hold Portfolios, in order that they may have full time for these most important duties. All the Ministers should have a right of access to the Cabinet, and naturally, all Ministers might be summoned individually or collectively to confer with the Cabinet.

Mr. Lloyd George took the ground that it was a great advantage in the form of government which he inaugurated in 1917, that he was able to secure the services of men of administrative ability but without parliamentary experience.

It is probable that in Canada there are a larger proportion of men who have acquired sagacity, whose counsel and advice would be most useful to a Prime Minister, but who are debarred from giving it because it is too difficult for them to acquire parliamentary experience. It might be considered advisable that one or two of such men should find a place in the Cabinet. Individuals now are undoubtedly consulted by Prime Ministers and the Government, but in private life we know the difference between the value of advice given on a special case, and that given by a person familiar with the whole course of events. Such individuals could have their status "legitimised" by making them members of the Privy Council.

This, however, is no essential part of the scheme I am proposing. The essential part is, and it is not new, that a Cabinet responsible for Policy, should be a Unit and that for successful work it should be few in number. The Cabinet thus devoting all their time to deliberation and supervision, the executive work of the government falls on the **MINISTRY**. The number of the Ministry shall be sufficiently large to give a proper Head to each Department of the work of the State. They go in and out of power with the Cabinet but are individually responsible to Parliament for the way in which they carry out the directions of the Cabinet.

A concrete case will perhaps make my meaning more clear than any general exposition. It has been represented, for example, to the Government, that it is desirable to improve the Harbor of Kingston. The facts laid before them (and shortly I shall suggest a method by which the facts bearing on all such questions can be better obtained than they are at present) justifies, in their opinion, this expenditure on the Harbor of Kingston. The Cabinet decides to go on with this work, so an item is placed in the estimates appropriating money for it. If it should happen that the item was challenged

in the House, and an adverse vote was cast, the Government would go out, and with it, the Minister.

In these points, Cabinet responsibility does not differ from present practice, but in the carrying out of the work, its design, the way the contracts are given, the prices, the manner of execution, there is no Cabinet responsibility. The responsibility is on the Minister of Public Works in carrying out the work allotted to him. He stands before the House as an Executive Officer charged with carrying out certain work, not as one member of a Cabinet who stand and fall together, and who can call, when any of their acts are challenged, on the party loyalty of all their supporters in the House.

I venture to think, and I trust some of those who listen to me, will agree that no better system could be devised to heighten Ministerial responsibility and to make easier the control of parliament.

These are both things recommended by the British Committee as highly desirable in quite different circumstances from those of Canada, where expenditures on Public Works, using the term in a wider sense, are about the only expenditures which can be curtailed, and so make it peculiarly desirable that the shields of a diluted responsibility and of Party loyalty should not protect extravagance and inefficiency.

Another point on which the English report dwells is the importance of full examination and research before action is taken. Outside the sphere of their own immediate personal knowledge, Ministers have to act in many cases on information which they know is prejudiced and interested. The bettering of the machinery of government which we are considering, would involve laying before the government, and, therefore, parliament, information as full, as accurate and as independent as is possible. I propose the setting up of two agencies. One of them is in existence elsewhere; the other, I think, will be new.

The first of them is the Tariff Commission. It would deal with all facts connected with production, transportation and living conditions, both in Canada and other countries. This matter has been so much discussed that I shall only touch on it in the briefest way. Its advantages have recently been set forth in the press. Such a commission would give on this question, which, as we all know, excites the liveliest passions, and threatens to make sectional divisions in a country which requires to be united, facts, insofar as the facts can be ascertained as they actually are. It would leave to the government



the whole question of policy but the government would lay before parliament the facts on which their fiscal policy was based. This is not quite the same as the United States Tariff Commission.

The United States Tariff Commission was created by an Act of Congress during 1916 and consists of six members, of whom not more than three should be members of the same political party. Section 702, ch. 463, defines their duties, further amplified by Section 704, and these read as follows:—

“Sec. 702. That it shall be the duty of said commission to investigate the administration and fiscal and industrial effects of the customs laws of this country now in force or which may be hereafter enacted, the relations between the rates of duty on raw materials and finished or partly finished products, the effects of ad valorem and specific duties and of compound specific and ad valorem duties, all questions relative to the arrangement of schedules and classification of articles in the several schedules of the custom law, and, in general, to investigate the operation of customs laws, including their relation to the Federal Revenues, their effect upon the industries and labor of the country, and to submit reports of its investigations as hereafter provided.”

“Sec. 704. The Commission shall have power to investigate the tariff relations between the United States and foreign countries, commercial treaties, preferential provisions, economic alliances, the effect of export bounties and preferential transportation rates, the volume of importations compared with domestic production and consumption, and conditions, causes and effects relating to competition of foreign industries with those of the United States, including dumping and cost of production.”

The information it obtains is to be transmitted to the President, and to the Committee of Ways and Means of the House, and the Committee on Finance of the Senate, and for the President and either of these committees they shall make such investigations as they may be directed. The machinery of other departments of the government is placed at their disposal. They have large powers as to the summoning of witnesses and there is in the Act a quite proper provision that it shall be unlawful for any of the commission or of its staff to divulge knowledge of the trade secrets or processes obtained by them in the course of their investigations.

Already the scope of their enquiry is wide. There is in the Library of Parliament a full report of theirs on free zones in ports of the United States, which deals exhaustively with that important subject. I would call the attention of the Members of this House to that document as illustrating the thoroughness of their treatment of a subject which might be considered only

indirectly concerned with the general questions with which this commission has to deal.

This report on free zones was taken up through a reference to the commission of two bills dealing with the establishment of free zones in the ports of the United States. It gives the history of such ports, their progress in Europe, suggestions as to the betterment of the submitted bills and evidence from various individuals and bodies as to the desirability of their establishment, so this report makes possible an intelligent discussion of such a subject, which would otherwise have entailed much labour on the part of those called upon to vote. Similar reports of the tariff commission proposed for Canada, would give to Canadian Ministers and Canadian Legislators equally valuable service.

The other Commission to which I refer, may be described as the Public Works Commission, to which would be referred for report as to the facts, all proposals to the government which required expenditure. They would examine into these proposals and would give findings as to the national importance of each, the importance to the community immediately to be benefitted, and both these findings in relation to the cost. They should be empowered to suggest alternative schemes, and their findings should be in the hands of Parliament before proposals of expenditure would be brought down.

Recurring again to the example which I gave, the Harbor of Kingston—if proposals were made by any government, for example, to make a harbor which would take vessels of 24 feet draft at Kingston, while the river below had a draft of 12 feet, and the Welland Canal a draft of 18 feet, the report of the commission would kill the project. In the same way the findings of the commission would be a safeguard to a Minister or to a government. They are bound within limits to please constituencies. They do not desire to alienate the sympathies of any of their supporters and yet proposals are made to them which are preposterous and would be killed by the plain statement of the actual facts in the case. It would also give the Minister independent information, and I am sure that the present Minister of Public Works or any of his predecessors has found that the most difficult thing was to get accurate information on the various projects which are presented to him. Sir John A. Macdonald once said that the most valuable legacy from Mr. McKenzie's government was the Auditor-General. It put him in a position to point out that the Auditor-General could not pass any expenditure not authorized specifically and that much



as he would like to oblige his friends, he was sure on his side that they would not wish to injure the government by asking for expenditure which the Auditor-General did not consider authorized by action of Parliament. The advantages to Sir John, which every other Prime Minister since has found, was that this enabled him to reject improper proposals without creating ill will. The Public Works Commission would serve the same purpose to protect Ministers, for many requests made to a government would appear absurd and unjustified when examined from the standpoint above indicated, but their absurdity does not prevent the applicants from urging them with ferocity and submitting with rancour to their rejection—a rejection which is seriously imperilled on the approach of every election.

I would regard it as essential that at least one member of the Public Works Commission should be a man of vision, of wide information and with a belief in the future of Canada, for such a Commission would fail if it did not build for a future, which we are bound to believe, should be one of regularly expanding prosperity.

These commissions should be small, permanent, with members of the highest class. We have now three Commissions which so discharge their duties that the presumption is in any particular case, that their decisions are sound. Their duties are both to collect facts, and to give decisions on those facts. I refer to the Railway Commission, the Purchasing Commission and the International Joint Commission. The two new Commissions which are now proposed, would have a less difficult task, viz: of accurately ascertaining facts and clearly expressing them.

I trust I have established that we would reach by such a system as this proposed, increased efficiency on both sides of government. I am aware that it attacks the solidarity of the government. It preserves solidarity in the Cabinet, but it dissolves the solidarity of the executive ministers' responsibility. The solidarity of joint ministerial responsibility covers more sins than the mantle of charity. This is in outline the scheme I submit for the consideration of the House, as a matter for discussion.

I may point out certain effects it should have beyond those already indicated, viz: the opportunity for constructive legislation given to the Cabinet, the placing of ministerial responsibility within its departments at its highest degree, and increasing parliamentary responsibility and parliamentary control. It would inconvenience a Cabinet, for the more the actions of any

Cabinet are taken on trust, the better pleased its members are. But the days of "Short's your friend and not Codlin" are passing, and Cabinets of the future must for their own stability and the good of the people, submit to this inconvenience.

On the other hand, the system would be an advantage to the Prime Minister in this respect, that an adverse vote in the House against one of his Ministers would be serving notice on the Prime Minister that one of his administrators did not possess the confidence of a House in which his party has a majority. It is, I think, safe to say that if it is as hard to get into a Ministry as many aspirants have found it, it is still harder for a Prime Minister to get rid of an unsatisfactory colleague.

It would, I think, tend to reduce the demand for ministerial representation which so seriously hampers the choice of any Prime Minister. Most of the anxiety about this springs from the belief that local interests, mostly of a material kind, can best be safeguarded by Cabinet representation. With patronage eliminated, with purchasing done on a business basis, with the Public Works Commission reporting on the essential merits of every scheme for expending money in a local way, there would be very little left to be promoted by inner and secret influences. Sectionalism is a thing which cannot be eliminated, but everything which lessens its evil effects is a benefit. Life-giving water is not drawn from a parish pump.

Again, direct personal individual responsibility would tend to do away with patronage by a more direct and less cumbersome system than that of a Civil Service Commission. This Commission chooses men for work that they do not know about, for the carrying out of which they are not responsible, and reduces to a minimum the power of the people who are responsible for the work to choose, to discipline, to dismiss or to promote the individuals who are carrying it on. If Ministers were individually responsible they would choose their subordinates with care.

If my previous statements that the administrative business of the country was badly organized, expensive and inefficient, were called in question, I would bring forward as an additional argument that practices must be extraordinarily bad which could be bettered by so cumbersome a remedy as this method of choosing people. The truth is, an evil word standing for an evil thing has blinded people to the real significance of the thing. What the thing really is, is **selection** of the best in personnel or material to accomplish certain ends. No one ever heard of the **patronage** of the head of a great railway, of a great bank, of a great industrial institution. It does not exist, although each of



such men promote, dismiss, either directly, or indirectly through their deputies, thousands of men. They select them to get results. If they do not get results they change them and their stockholders will not keep in their positions Executive Heads who cannot make a satisfactory showing. Patronage flourished at an evil time when the conception of government was different from what it has been in our times, still more different from what it will be in the years immediately before us. It began when the government was a King's government, when the Ministers were the King's Ministers, not fully responsible to parliament—when the King was regarded as the fountain, not only of honor, but of bounties—when parliament was full of placemen, and when some of its members were subsidised with cash and yet did not hang their heads. Today we have a different conception of Kingship. We have a different conception of parliamentary responsibility, and we have a King more secure on his throne through the affections of the people than any of his Hanoverian predecessors. If we are to rise to the height of our opportunities, the time is not far distant when he who says **patronage** when he really means **selection**, will be talking as dead a language as the man in Canada who proposes to settle a private injury by a duel.

There has gone abroad an expressed desire to sweep away secret diplomacy, which is accomplishing its result. The tendency of the plan proposed will be to sweep away secret administration. I am inclined to believe, and I am not alone in this, that as far as the government of Canada is concerned, the unrest which prevails is to some considerable extent due to the fact that the people of Canada to so small an extent, know what the government is doing and to a smaller extent the reasons for its actions. We have before us times of great financial stress. It will be important that the people of Canada should understand, not only what the government is doing, but the reasons for the government's action. The tariff closely affects the interests of the people. If opportunity is given for the people to ascertain the facts connected with industries, if the Public Works Commission makes it possible for them to weigh the advantages of those works which the government takes up, it is fair to believe that the people will bear heavier burdens with cheerfulness than if there is ground for malignant rumour, for surmise, for the impression that sinister influences are dictating the course of a Minister. The people of Canada have shown that they can be trusted. I believe that the time is not far distant, and I hope this is the case, that the people of Canada will care more for

being well governed than they will care whether any particular group of men are charged with the executive duties of government.

No word has been on the pen and on the tongues of men in the last two years so often as Democracy. This means something. There are some who believe it means the shaping of policy by the ignorant, with administration by the incompetent. I think it is more than a mere impulse, more than flattery of the people who will go to the polls. I think it will so shape itself **that the people will demand competence from a government and in return will give confidence to a government** if they are satisfied that it is doing the best it can under circumstances of which they are fully and fairly apprised. This has been the history of the last four years—indeed as far as I know, it has been the history of the last forty years. I have taken upon myself to suggest various means by which I think this condition of mutual confidence and of greater effectiveness can be brought about. It is only mechanical. If they are good at all (to quote the British report): “Their practical efficiency will depend upon the zeal and discretion with which they are applied from day to day by Parliament, by Ministers, and by the officers of Departments, **the living forces whose spirit is essential to any form of government that is more than a machine.**” The old leaven will continue to work, human nature will not change materially, but the peoples of the Allies have shown that they can respond to a great call. In the conditions which the people of Canada will have to meet, there will be a great call, for failure to deal with critical problems which are pressing for solution, means disaster, and indifferent success or deferred success will mean much material loss, and in addition, an impairment of the reputation which this country has won.

The people of Canada are accustomed to united action, to organization in their social, their political, their business life. I feel certain, therefore, that whether the suggestions I have made, meet or do not meet with approval, that the time will come when the people of Canada will not tolerate in its government a degree of efficiency falling far below that to which they are accustomed in any other form of corporate action.



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